

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 AID-20 NIC-01 OMB-01

RSR-01 /120 W

----- 079889

R 280440 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3827

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 11623

E. O. 11652 GDS- DECLASSIFY 6/25/78

TAGS: ELAB PINT VS

SUBJECT: IS THE GVN ORGANIZING A GOVERNMENT- CONTROLLED NATIONAL
TRADE UNION?

REF: A/ SAIGON 4895; B/ STATE 055597

1. TRAN QUOC BUU AND SEVERAL OF HIS PROVINCIAL LEADERS HAVE
STATED ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS AND TO A VARIETY OF AMERICAN
OFFICIALS THAT THE GVN, THROUGH " THE DEMOCRACY PARTY," IS
ORGANIZING A NATIONAL TRADE UNION.

2. OSA AND EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE BEATEN THE BRUSH TO FIND
NON- CVT SOURCES WHO COULD CONFIRM OR DENY THE CHARGE.

3. TWO EMBASSY OFFICERS, ON SEPARATE OCCASIONS, CONFRONTED
MINISTER NGUYEN VAN NGAI WITH THE QUESTION. NGAI ADMITTED TO
BOTH THAT THE GVN WAS INDEED ORGANIZING A NEW LABOR MOVEMENT.
THE PROFESSED INTENTION WAS TO ORGANIZE IN GEOGRAPHIC AND OCCU-
PATIONAL AREAS WHERE THE CVT WAS NOT ACTIVE. QUANG NGAI AND
BINH DUONG PROVINCES ARE THE FARTHEST ADVANCED, HE SAID. YET
WE ARE UNABLE TO FIND ANY HARD EVIDENCE OF THIS STATEMENT HAVING
BEEN IMPLEMENTED. NGAI' S STATEMENT MAY BE ONLY AN ADMISSION
OF INTENT.

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4. PHAN VAN CHI, PRESIDENT OF THE CSTV, REPORTED THAT HIS EXECUTIVE BOARD VOTED TO ESTABLISH A CSTV CHAPTER IN THE DEMOCRACY PARTY. CHI AND HIS BOARD MEMBERS TOLD THE LABATT THAT IT WAS THEIR AIM TO PERSUADE ALL THEIR MEMBERS, AND ANY WORKER THEY COULD REACH, TO JOIN THE DEMOCRACY PARTY BECAUSE IT COULD BEST SERVE THE WORKERS' INTERESTS. CHI HAS A REPUTATION FOR IRRESPONSIBILITY AND WE TREAT HIS STATEMENTS WITH CAUTION.

5. TRAN SINH, PRESIDENT OF THE CONFEDERATION OF INDUSTRIAL, AGRICULTURAL AND CONSTRUCTION WORKERS, REPORTED THAT HIS UNION HAD BEEN APPROACHED TO JOIN THE DEMOCRACY PARTY BUT THEY REFUSED. THEY DO NOT WANT TO BE IN POLITICS, HE SAID, CITING THE FACT THAT ALTHOUGH THEY ARE FRIENDS OF TRAN QUOC BUU, THEY DID NOT JOIN THE CONG NONG PARTY.

6. BUI LUONG, PRESIDENT OF THE CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS (CGSL) DENIED A CURRENT RUMOR THAT HE PERSONAGLY WAS INVOLVED WITH THE GVN. HE SAID HE TOLD PRESIDENT THIEU IT WAS ILLEGAL TO BE A UNION IN POLITICS; HOWEVER, " I LET THE GVN USE MY NAME AS A MEMBER OF THE PRESIDUM OF THE PEOPLE' S FRONT TO STRUGGLE FOR PEACE AND SELF- DETERMINATION. BUT I DON' T DO ANYTHING FOR THE FRONT," HE ADDED.

7. BUI LUONG' S LAMBRETTA DRIVERS UNION AND THE CVT LAMBRETTA DRIVERS HAVE ENTERED INTO AN ARRANGEMENT WITH SOME WEALTHY BUSINESSMEN WHEREBY THE LAMBRETTA DRIVERS SELL THEIR VEHICLES AND BUY SURPLUS US ARMY JAPANESE BUSES TO REESTABLISH A SAIGON BUS SERVICE TO BE OWNED BY THE WORKERS.

8. BUI LUONG' S CONFEDERATION AND PHAN VAN CHI' S CONFEDERATION ARE NOT REGISTERED UNDER THE LAW AND THEREFORE CANNOT LEGALLY REPRESENT ANYONE. YET BOTH BOAST THAT THEY NEGOTIATE WITH EMPLOYERS AND SIGN AGREEMENTS; AND BUI LUONG REPRESENTS LAMBRETTA DRIVERS IN DEALING WITH THE SAIGON CITY COUNCIL. BUI LUONG' S EXEMPTION FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THE LABOR UNION LAW MAY REFLECT A DEAL BETWEEN HIM AND THE MAYOR OF SAIGON WHO IS ALSO HEAD OF THE SAIGON CHAPTER OF THE DEMOCRACY PARTY.

9. WITH REGARD TO MINISTER NGAI' S STATEMENTS CONCERNING
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QUANG NGAI, ON JUNE 20 WE LEARNED THAT THE CVT LAMBRETTA DRIVERS IN QUANG NGAI WERE CHALLENGED BY A NEW GROUP OF 33 DRIVERS FOR POSSESSION OF THEIR ROUTES. CVT DRIVERS WHO PROTESTED WERE BLUDGEONED BY THE POLICE, ARRESTED, AND DRAGGED OFF TO JAIL.

10. DANANG CONGEN OFFICERS ARE RECHECKING THE DISPUTE BUT

BELIEVE THE INCIDENT IS PURELY A LOCAL ONE INVOLVING AN EXPELLED CVT TRANSPORTATION UNION OFFICIAL WHO MANAGED TO BRIBE LOCAL POLICE AND PROVINCE OFFICIALS TO ISSUE 33 OVER- THE- QUOTA LICENSES. CONGEN OFFICERS AT THIS WRITING REPORT THAT THE DEMOCRACY PARTY IN QUANG NGAI IS INACTIVE AND THEY HAVE NO EVIDENCE OF DEMOCRACY PARTY MANIPULATION DESIGNED TO CREATE A GVN- CONTROLLED UNION.

11. COMMENT: WE ARE UNABLE TO COME UP WITH HARD EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT BUU' S STATEMENT THAT THE GVN IS ORGANIZING A GOVERNMENT UNION. WHEN PRESIDENT THIEU VISITED WASHINGTON DC, HE MET WITH GEORGE MEANY AND HIS AFL- CIO DELEGATION WHO PUT GREAT STRESS ON THE NEED TO MAINTAIN A FREE AND INDEPENDENT CVT. PERHAPS THIEU, IMPRESSED WITH THEIR VIEWS, CAME BACK AND ALTERED PREVIOUS PLANS TO FORM A GVN NATIONAL TRADE UNION. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE TEMPTATION TO SET UP A GVN UNION IS GREAT. WE WILL CONTINUE TO WATCH DEVELOPMENTS CLOSELY. UNQUOTE.
WHITEHOUSE

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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